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PARKER HILL STUDY

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PARKER HILL STUDY

AUGUST, 1970

Boston Redevelopment Authority  
Planning Department  
District Planning Program





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## I. INTRODUCTION

There is a serious need for an increase in the supply of housing in the metropolitan area. The demand for this new housing, however, seems to be focused within the City of Boston, where available vacant land is at a premium and where community opposition to new housing proposals has recently reached levels heretofore known only in the suburbs.

In order to facilitate the building of housing in Boston that (1) is of the kind that is in shortest supply and that (2) will enhance the neighborhoods in which it is located, the Boston Redevelopment Authority has established a "New Neighborhoods" program. Studies have been undertaken of a wide variety of vacant and underutilized parcels throughout the City to determine the feasibility of building housing on them. Included in the studies have been evaluations of potential uses other than housing, particularly new public facilities that may be needed in the local neighborhood. Upon completion of these feasibility studies, the Parker Hill site was chosen as one of a half-dozen sites within the City that offers the greatest potential for constructing new housing. This report is an examination of that potential.



The Parker Hill site is located in the northern part of Jamaica Plain (see Map 1). It is bounded on the north and east by Fisher Street, on the west by Bucknam Street, and on the south by Heath Street and the rear of Colburn Street. The topography of the site varies considerably and there are 55 residential structures of various kinds now existing on the site.

This report proposes three development alternatives for the Parker Hill site, these being residential, institutional and a combination of residential-institutional. A more detailed description of them is as follows:

1. Development of 1,300 units of housing for families and for employees of local institutions, with a neighborhood playground and local retail facilities.
2. Construction of a new medical institution to include a clinic, hospital, extended care unit, motel and 120 apartments for residents and nurses.
3. Combined development of a clinic and an extended care unit with a residential neighborhood of family housing.

This report is arranged in a format similar to the methodology used in evaluating potential uses of the Parker Hill site. The first section is an examination of the characteristics of the neighborhood surrounding the site, with particular emphasis given to identifying trends and





JAMAICA PLAIN  
PARKER HILL

MAP I



DISTRICT PLANNING PROGRAM  
BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY







determining strengths and weaknesses. The second section explores the nature of the site itself, including its ownership, topography and developmental suitability. The third section briefly states the development objectives, which are based on the results of the first two sections. The last section is a detailed description of the several development alternatives that are the most desirable and/or feasible.



## II. DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA

### A. Location

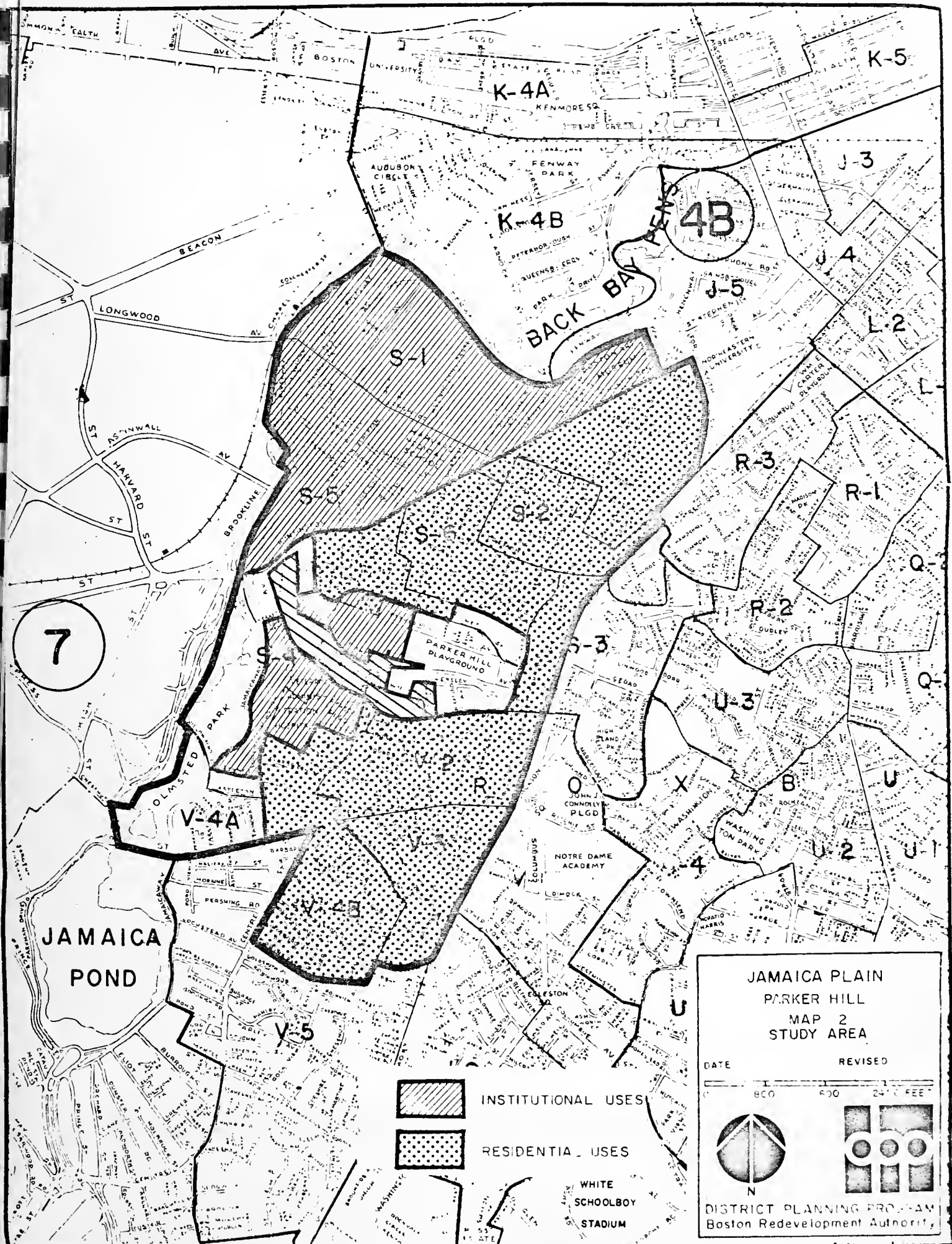
The Parker Hill Study Area is located in the northern section of Jamaica Plain (see Map 2). It is generally bounded by the Fenway on the north; the Town of Brookline on the west; Perkins Street, Centre Street and Spring Park Avenue on the south; and Penn Central Railroad line on the east.

Within the area, the two major land uses are residential and institutional. The residential sections consist mostly of deteriorating two and three family frame structures with a scattering of masonry walk-up and high-rise apartments. The two major institutions in the area are the New England Baptist Hospital and the Veterans Administration Hospital (see Map 3).

### B. Population

Although there are significant differences in the age, race, income and household composition of the population of the Parker Hill study area, certain trends are constant throughout. These pertain to a loss in total population, a shift in the predominant age groups, and an increase in the racial composition of the population. These three





7

JAMAICA  
POND

V-4A

V-5



INSTITUTIONAL USES



RESIDENTIAL USES

WHITE  
SCHOOLBOY  
STADIUM

JAMAICA PLAIN  
PARKER HILL  
MAP 2  
STUDY AREA

DATE \_\_\_\_\_ REVISED \_\_\_\_\_  
800 600 24' FEET



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Boston Redevelopment Authority



MOSCOW  
REHAB.

NEW ENGLAND  
BAPTIST

CAMPUS  
HIGH

VETERANS  
ADMINISTRATION

JEFFERSON



HOSPITAL



REST HOME



SCHOOL



INDUSTRY



INFILL

JAMAICA PLAIN  
PARKER HILL

MAP 3  
ADJACENT LAND USES

DATE 6/16/70

REVISED

0 400 800 1200 FEET



DISTRICT PLANNING PROGRAM  
Boston Redevelopment Authority





changes have major implications for the development of Parker Hill.

Indications are that the population of the Parker Hill study area has decreased considerably since 1960. This loss was experienced in all areas of the district with the highest having taken place in the Brigham Circle sub-area.

The greatest shift in age groups took place in the Brigham Circle area. Other major shifts in age groupings took place which cannot be quantified until the 1970 census returns are compiled. The Parker Hill and Brigham Circle areas, in particular, have experienced a major influx of students and young professionals and an absolute increase in the number of elderly.

The third major demographic trend in the study area is the increase in the racial composition of the population. The 1960 census indicated that only 6% of the total population was non-white. By contrast, in 1970 at least 50% of the students in all the elementary schools of the Parker Hill area were non-white. This shift in racial composition is reflected in an increase in the number of non-white residents living in the Bromley Heath and Mission Hill projects, as well as throughout the study area.



There are several major implications which one can draw from these population shifts. First the Parker Hill and Brigham Circle areas can no longer be solely characterized as a residential neighborhood. The demand for transient accommodations to house students, nurses and young professionals is continually increasing. Second, the Parker Hill study area is becoming extremely heterogeneous. There is an increasing mixture of ethnic and age groups. Third, although there has been a significant increase in the non-white population, there are no indications that the white population will leave the area in great numbers.

C. Housing

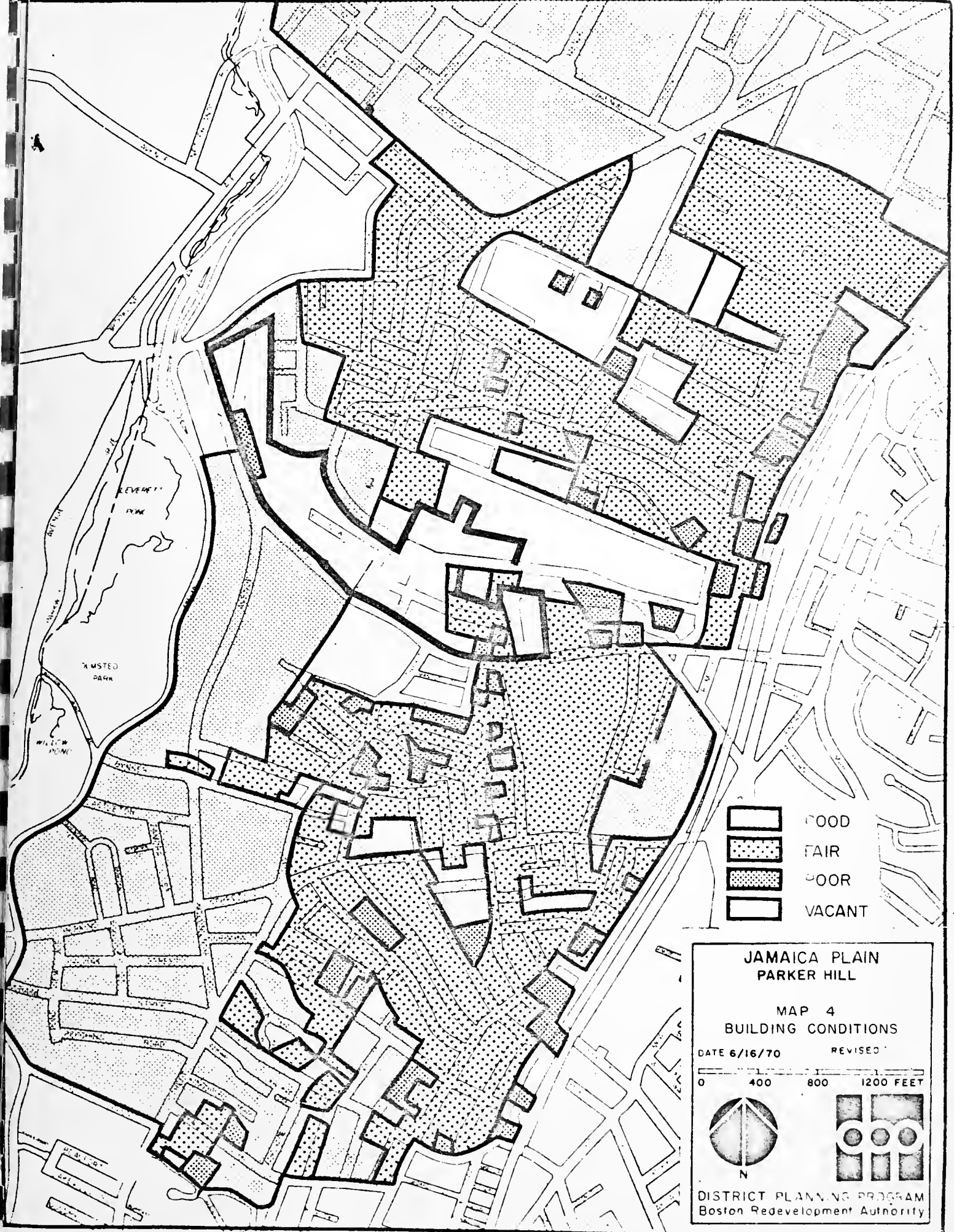
Housing in the Parker Hill study area is characterized by deteriorating two and three family frame structures and masonry walk-up and high-rise apartments (see Map 4). The boundary line between these two types of housing is Heath Street.

North of Heath Street, about 20% of the family houses have been converted into apartments. In addition, eleven walk-up apartment houses with approximately 236 apartments have been constructed in recent years on vacant lots.

In the area south of Heath Street, the majority of the structures are two or three family houses. Although the

8/7  
127





- GOOD
- FAIR
- POOR
- VACANT

JAMAICA PLAIN  
PARKER HILL

MAP 4  
BUILDING CONDITIONS

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Boston Redevelopment Authority



1960 Census showed that over 75% of the houses were in sound condition (see Table 1), a recent survey by the Harvard-MIT Joint Center for Urban Studies showed that the residential structures in the area had deteriorated faster than in any other area of the City.

With three towers ranging from 13 to 25 stories in height, the Whitney Street Project contains the only high rise residential structure in the entire study area. The Project contains 710 apartments, some with as many as three bedrooms. Rents range from \$155 to \$315 per month.

The following programs to create new and rehabilitated housing in the Parker Hill area are now being implemented (see Map 5):

1. Jamaica Plain, south of Heath Street is within a code enforcement area.
2. A block of houses on South Huntington Avenue is to be rehabilitated under the 221D4 program.
3. Public housing areas are being up-graded by the Boston Housing Authority.
4. Six In-Fill projects for a total of 36 units are to be constructed on Parker Hill beginning this summer.
5. Harvard Medical School proposes to build 1,100 units of new housing, 200 units of which will serve the Roxbury Tenants of Harvard Community.





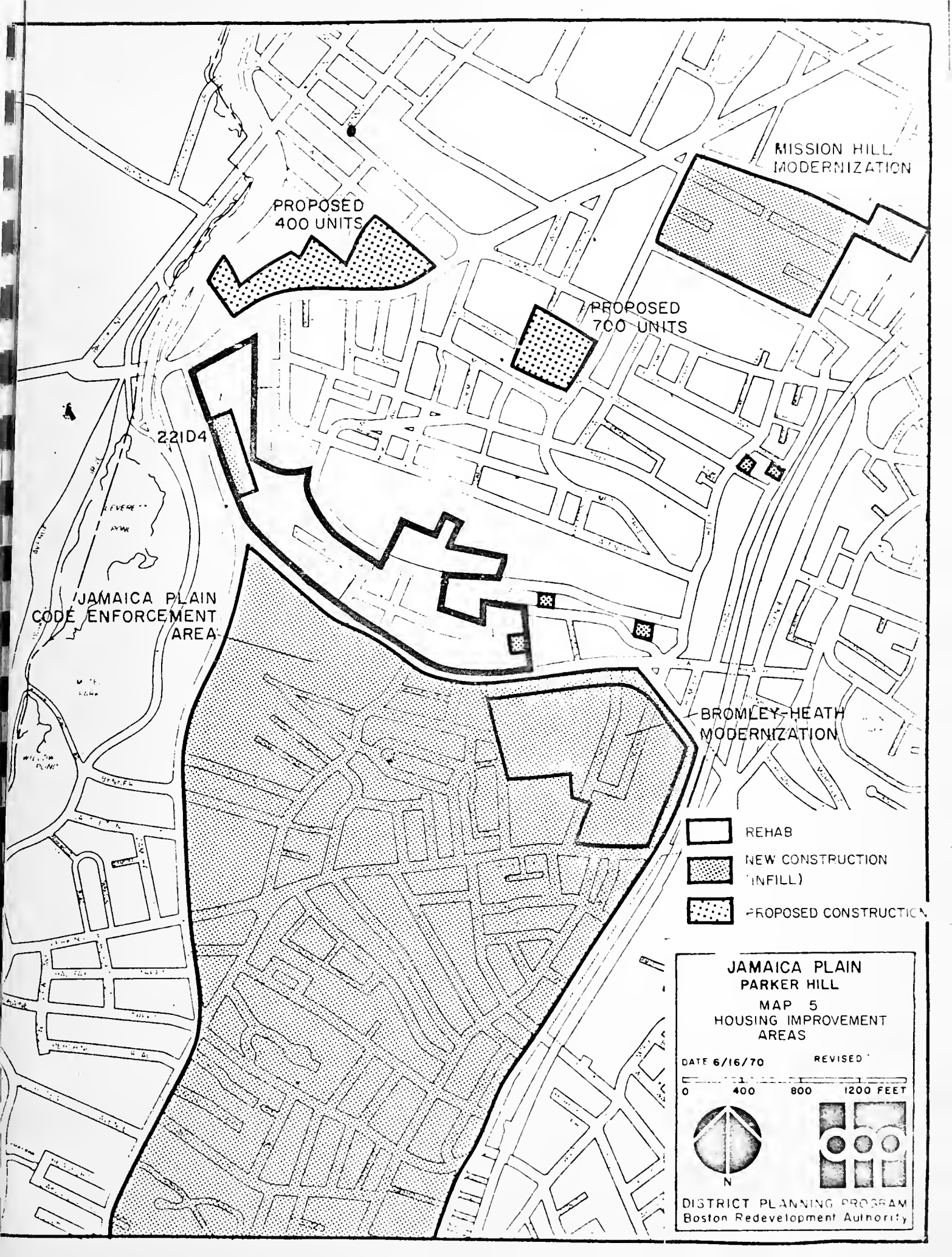
TABLE 1

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS 1960

Census Tract	Number of Dwelling Units	Condition of Units (%)	
		Sound	Deteriorating and Dilapidated
S-3	189	38	62
S-4	1011	48	52
S-5	1136	89	11
S-6	896	65	35
Sub-Total	3222	67	33
South Huntington, Roxbury tenants, Whitney Street, Mission Project			
S-4	53	5	95
S-5	609	94	6
S-6	381	65	35
S-2	864	73	27
Sub-Total	1907	76	24
North and South of Center Street			
V-4A	685	94	6
V-2	1748	84	16
V-4B	1067	83	17
V-3	989	48	52
Sub-Total	4489	78	22

Source: U.S. Census, 1960





MISSION HILL  
MODERNIZATION

PROPOSED  
400 UNITS

PROPOSED  
700 UNITS

221D4

JAMAICA PLAIN  
CODE ENFORCEMENT  
AREA

BROMLEY-HEATH  
MODERNIZATION

- REHAB
- NEW CONSTRUCTION  
(INFILL)
- PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION

JAMAICA PLAIN  
PARKER HILL  
MAP 5  
HOUSING IMPROVEMENT  
AREAS

DATE 6/16/70 REVISED  
0 400 800 1200 FEET



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Boston Redevelopment Authority



D. Commerce and Industry

1. Commerce

Commercial facilities are located in four sub-areas of the study area (see Map 6). Each of these locations varies in the quality and range of goods offered. None are within walking distance of the Parker Hill site.

The largest concentration of food and apparel stores is located on Washington Street in Brookline Village. This area is not directly accessible to the Parker Hill site by public transit.

The most accessible commercial areas are those located on Centre Street in Jamaica Plain and at Brigham Circle. Both of these locations are served by the Huntington Avenue Arborway trolley. Neither offers a full range of high quality merchandise.

The Centre Street commercial area is actually a strip of stores interspersed with houses and public facilities extending from Lamartine Street to the Arborway. The shops and service centers are for the most part located in old one story structures. Parking is a major problem.



BROOKLINE  
AVENUE

BRIGHAM  
CIRCLE

CENTER STREET  
Jamaica Plain Retail District

JAMAICA PLAIN  
PARKER HILL  
MAP 6  
LOCATION OF  
COMMERCIAL FACILITIES

DATE 6/16/70

REVISED

0 400 800 1200 FEET



DISTRICT PLANNING PROGRAM  
Boston Redevelopment Authority





The Brigham Circle shopping area is in some ways a duplication of the strip commercial stores located on Centre Street. But, in this case, the retail firms are located on Huntington Avenue and Tremont Street. In addition, a small shopping center which offers shared parking facilities exists at Brigham Circle.

The one major new retail area is located on Brookline Avenue. As a part of the Children's Hospital development, a bank, restaurant, and general retail store were included in the Children's Inn development. This complex, however, only serves the local medical area.

Two proposals have been advanced to provide a major new commercial complex adjacent to the Parker Hill site. The original Parker Hill-Fenway Plan projected the development of a commercial center at the corner of Huntington-South Huntington; but as a consequence of problems with the boundaries of the urban renewal project, this proposal never materialized. The Architects Collaborative report on the Southwest Expressway concluded that the Jackson Square intersection at Heath and Centre Streets would be logical as a site for locating a shopping center.



Neither of these proposals has been backed up by a market feasibility analysis. In fact, an economic survey of this area in 1964 by the consultant firm of Larry Smith concluded that new shopping areas were not required. This conclusion would have to be re-evaluated today in light of major new construction in the Fenway medical area and potential development on Parker Hill and within or adjacent to the Southwest Expressway.

## 2. Industry

The Parker Hill site is located adjacent to a major corridor of manufacturing firms. The Economic Development and Industrial Commission's surveys of these industries found the mix in this area to be typical for that of manufacturing firms in the City as a whole. One quarter of the firms manufacture apparel, printing or food products. In addition, the survey indicated that a large number of these industries employ a high percentage of unskilled and semi-skilled workers.

The major problem shared by these firms was the lack of expansion space. The Parker Hill site cannot meet this need. The topography is too severe and the land cost is out of the range for industrial development.



### E. Schools

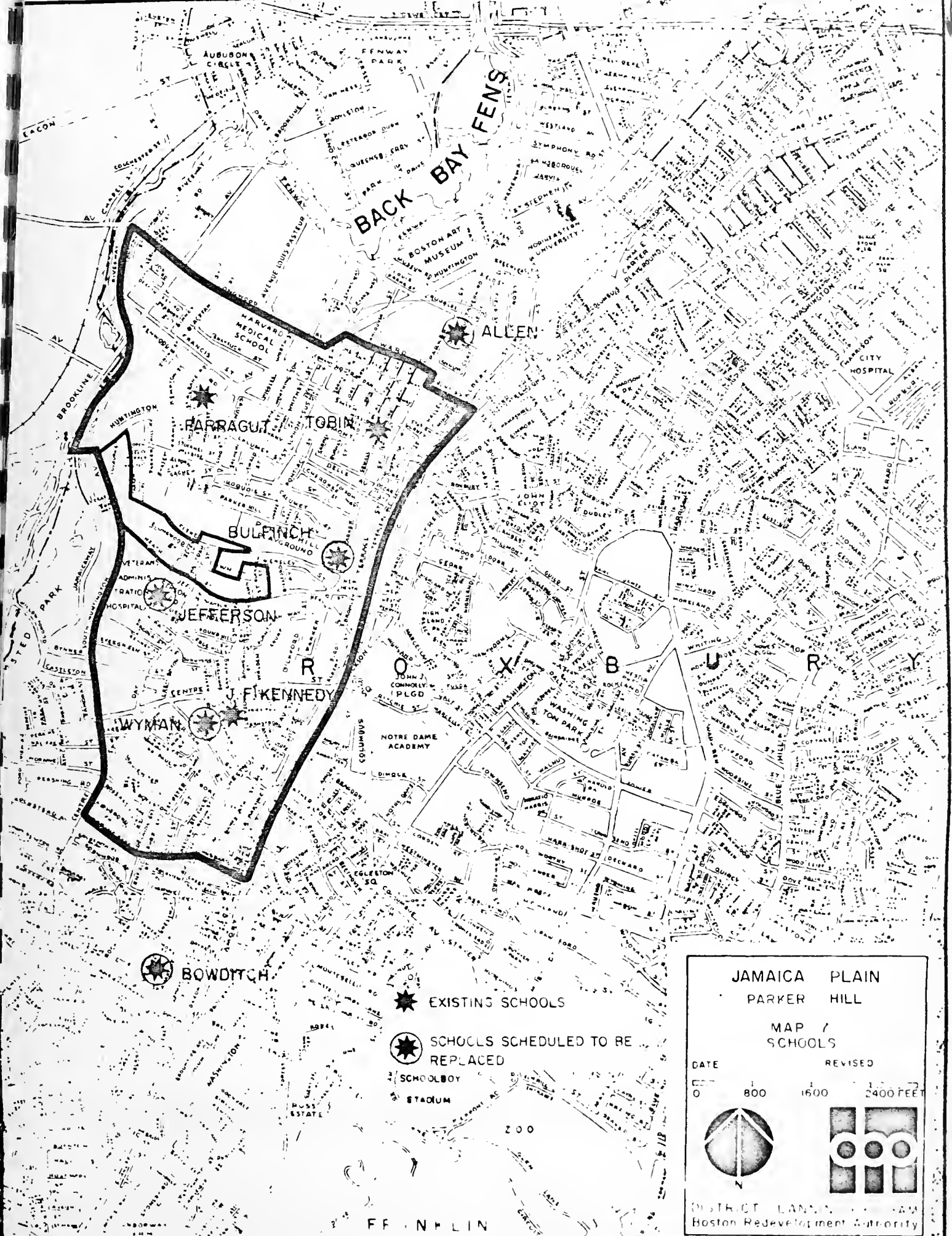
The Parker Hill site lies within the boundaries of the Jefferson Elementary School District (see Map 7). These boundaries generally are Fisher Street on the north, and Centre Street on the south. Within this district are located the Jefferson and Bulfinch Elementary Schools.

The existing Jefferson and Bulfinch Schools are scheduled for replacement by the new 1,000 pupil Jefferson School to open in 1971-72 (see Table 2). Assuming that the district enrollment remains constant at 760 students, and no large influx of students in the district occurs, the school will be able to absorb just under 250 additional students.

This potential excess capacity might be filled in several ways. First, the parochial school in the area, Blessed Sacrement, may be closing. This could result in an influx of an additional 500 K-5 students. Second, the racial balance of the district is presently 60% non-white. Therefore, it may be necessary to bus in additional white children in order to maintain a racially balanced school.

Besides the potential influx of the parochial school students (a problem of this magnitude would require an





★ EXISTING SCHOOLS

★ SCHOOLS SCHEDULED TO BE REPLACED

★ SCHOOLBOY

★ STADIUM

JAMAICA PLAIN  
PARKER HILL

MAP 7  
SCHOOLS

DATE REVISED  
0 800 1600 2400 FEET



DISTRICT LANDMARK COMMISSION  
Boston Redevelopment Authority





TABLE 2

EXISTING AND PROJECTED PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT CHARACTERISTICS

School District	School	Grades	Age of Building	Enrollment 1969	Schedule for Replacement	Proposed Capacity
J.F. Kennedy	J.F.K.	K-6	7	651		515
	Wyman	K-3	78	217	X	Wyman & Bow-
	*Bowditch	----	----	435	X	ditch - 1000
	*Kennedy	----	----	112		----
Jefferson	Jefferson	K-6	66	451	X	----
	Bulfinch	K-5	59	309	X	1000
Martin or Tobin	Tobin	K-8	11	670		760
	Farragut	K-6	66	348	X	Replacement-1000
	Allen	K-2	69	150	X	----

Source: Public Facilities Department



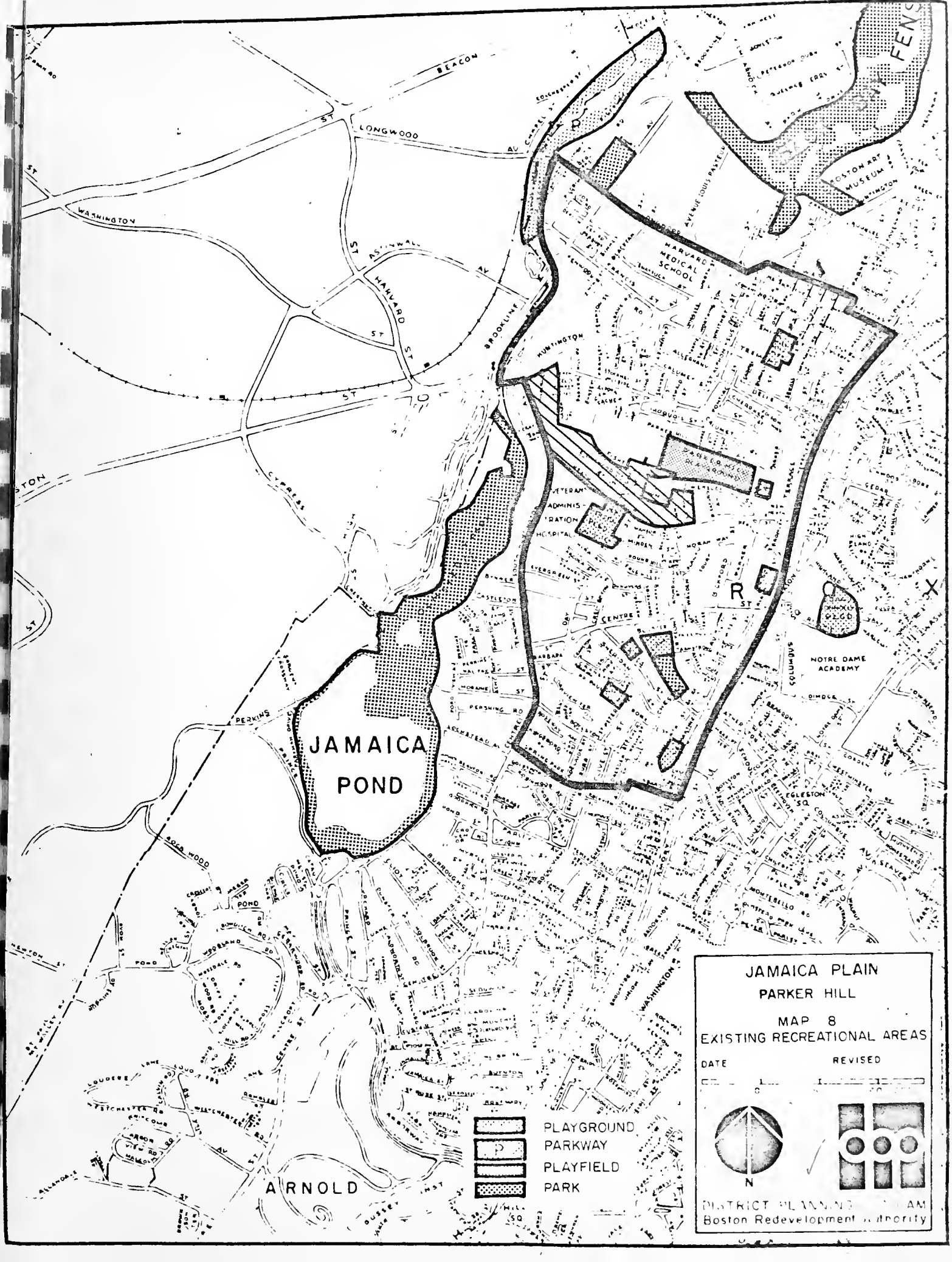
additional public school) a further problem is involved with drawing these students from the adjoining districts. The Tobin district covers the northern side of Parker Hill. The steep grade of this hill would require the busing of Tobin district students. In addition, the racial composition of this district is predominantly black. Thus, racial balance in both districts would be further weakened.

A somewhat different situation exists with respect to the Kennedy district. Busing would not necessarily be required, as there may be some limited flexibility in obtaining white students who could serve to maintain racial balance.

#### F. Parks

The Parker Hill site is located in an area which contains a complete range of open space facilities (see Map 8). Walking trails, boating, fishing, ice-skating and scenic areas are available at the Fenway, Olmstead and Riverway Park Systems. Regional playfields are located on top of Parker Hill, in the Fens-Lee Playground, and in the Olmstead Park. Local playfields are provided at the McLaughlin Playground on top of Parker Hill and at the Jefferson School (see Table 3).





JAMAICA  
POND

ARNOLD

- PLAYGROUND
- PARKWAY
- PLAYFIELD
- PARK

JAMAICA PLAIN  
PARKER HILL

MAP 8  
EXISTING RECREATIONAL AREAS

DATE REVISED



DISTRICT PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
Boston Redevelopment Authority



TABLE 3

EXISTING PARK AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Name of Facility	Operating Agent	Type of Facility	Size (Acres)
<u>FENWAY</u>			
Riverway	P. & R. Dept.	Pkwy	28.22
Back Bay - Fens	P. & R. Dept.	Park	113.19
Stadium - Lee Plgd.	P. & R. Dept.	Plgnd.	6.46
<u>PARKER HILL</u>			
McLaughlin	P. & R. Dept.	Plfld.	11.54
Mission Hill	P. & R. Dept.	Plgnd.	2.75
Bullfinch	School Dept.	School Plgnd.	.71
Tobin	" "	" "	.28
Farragut	" "	" "	.36
<u>JAMAICA PLAIN</u>			
Jefferson Playground	P. & R. Dept.	Plgnd.	3.00
McDevitt Playground	M.D.C.	Plgnd.	.43
Mozart Street	P. & R. Dept.	Plgnd.	.81
Paul Gore	P. & R. Dept.	Plgnd.	.12
Kennedy	School Dept.	Plgnd.	1.09
Wyman	School Dept.	Plgnd.	.58
Olmstead Park	P. & R. Dept.	Park	180.00

Source: Planning Department Survey





While the Parker Hill site is sufficiently served by these open space facilities, the McLaughlin Playground is at present underutilized because of its topography. The steep grade of the hill limits accessibility to the facility. In addition, the sub-soil and wind conditions on top of the hill restrict the type and quantity of grass. A last factor contributing to the underutilized nature of the playground is the low intensity of development on top of Parker Hill. The population in the area is just not large enough to make full use of the facility.

G. Public Services: Police, Fire, Health, Welfare

The Parker Hill site is moderately accessible to a full range of public service facilities. The Tobin building on Tremont Street contains a library, public welfare office, a police sub-station and a gymnasium. Health clinics are available at Curtis Hall, the Martha Elliott Center, and at the Back Bay Towers on Tremont Street. Fire apparatus is located on Huntington Avenue, Centre Street and at Roxbury Crossing.



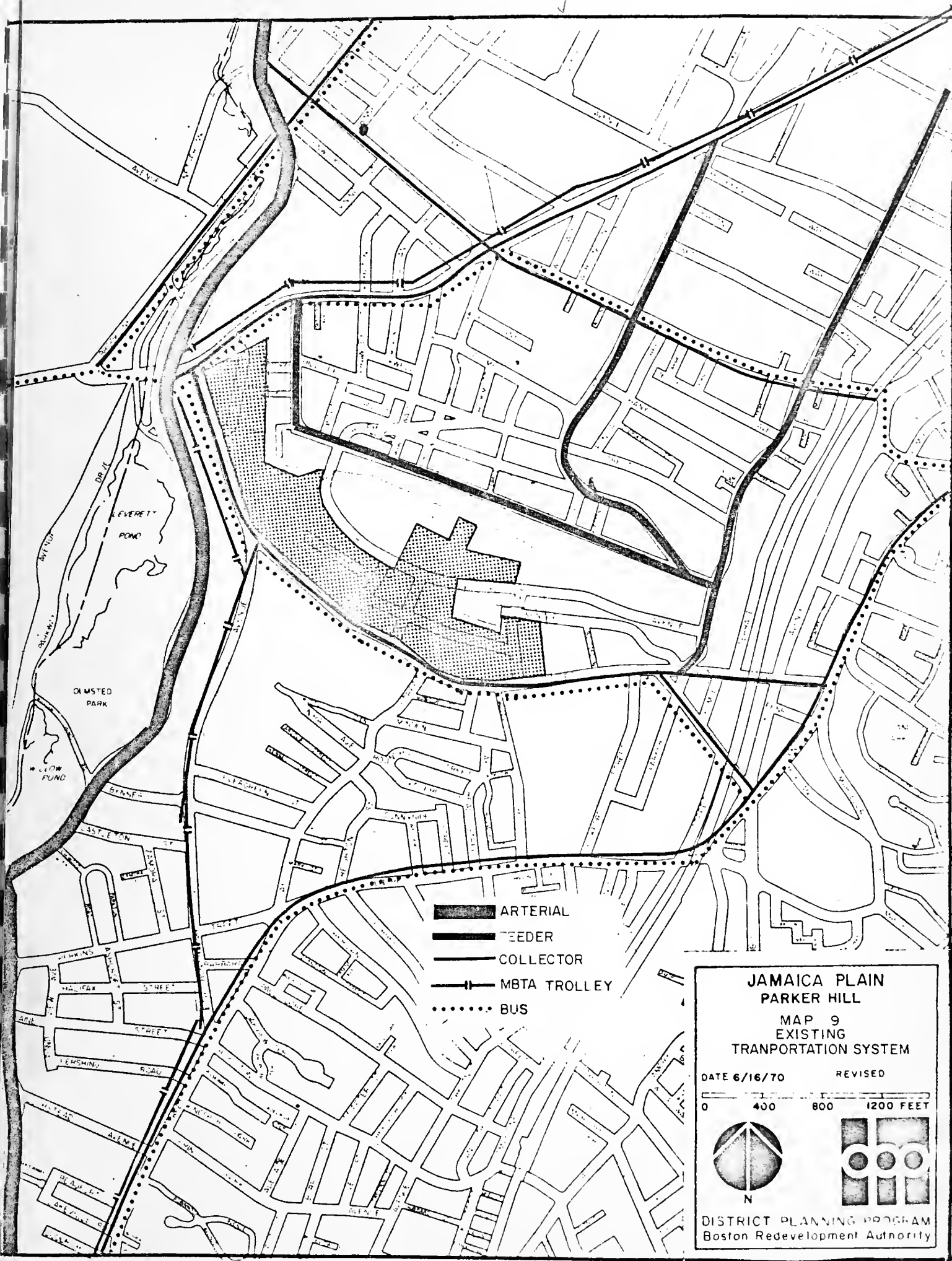
The major problem with all of these public services is that the demands placed upon them far exceed their resources. This problem, on the other hand, is not peculiar to Parker Hill. It is typical for all the moderate income areas of the City.

The Fire Department has proposed locating a new fire engine company near the corner of Tremont and St. Alphonsus Streets to improve the quality of service for Parker Hill. At present, the coverage is inhibited by the distance of existing stations from Parker Hill and the congestion of the local streets.

#### H. Transportation

Access to and around the Parker Hill site is dependent upon a poorly designed system of roads and public transit (see Map 9). Although the problems resulting from this condition are manageable at present, new construction in the Fenway and development of the site implies the need for four major types of improvements.





- ARTERIAL
- FEEDER
- COLLECTOR
- MBTA TROLLEY
- BUS

**JAMAICA PLAIN  
PARKER HILL**

MAP 9  
EXISTING  
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

DATE 6/16/70      REVISED

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DISTRICT PLANNING PROGRAM  
Boston Redevelopment Authority



1. The northwestern portion of the Parker Hill site is located at a major gateway to the City: the intersection of South Huntington and Huntington Avenue, at the Jamaicaway. The design of this intersection is far below the required capacity and this problem will have to be resolved if traffic flow on Huntington and South Huntington Avenues is to be improved.

2. Heath Street provides access to the southern portion of the site. This road at present is narrow and poorly paved. A present proposal calls for the widening of Heath Street as part of the Washington Park Boulevard extension.

3. The existing system of local feeder roads which service both Parker Hill and the development site are poorly designed. They are too narrow, and in many cases, too steep. Although the problem has been resolved for the present by the institution of one-way streets, this solution will prove to be merely a stop-gap, if any major construction takes place on Parker Hill. At the very least, street widenings are required.

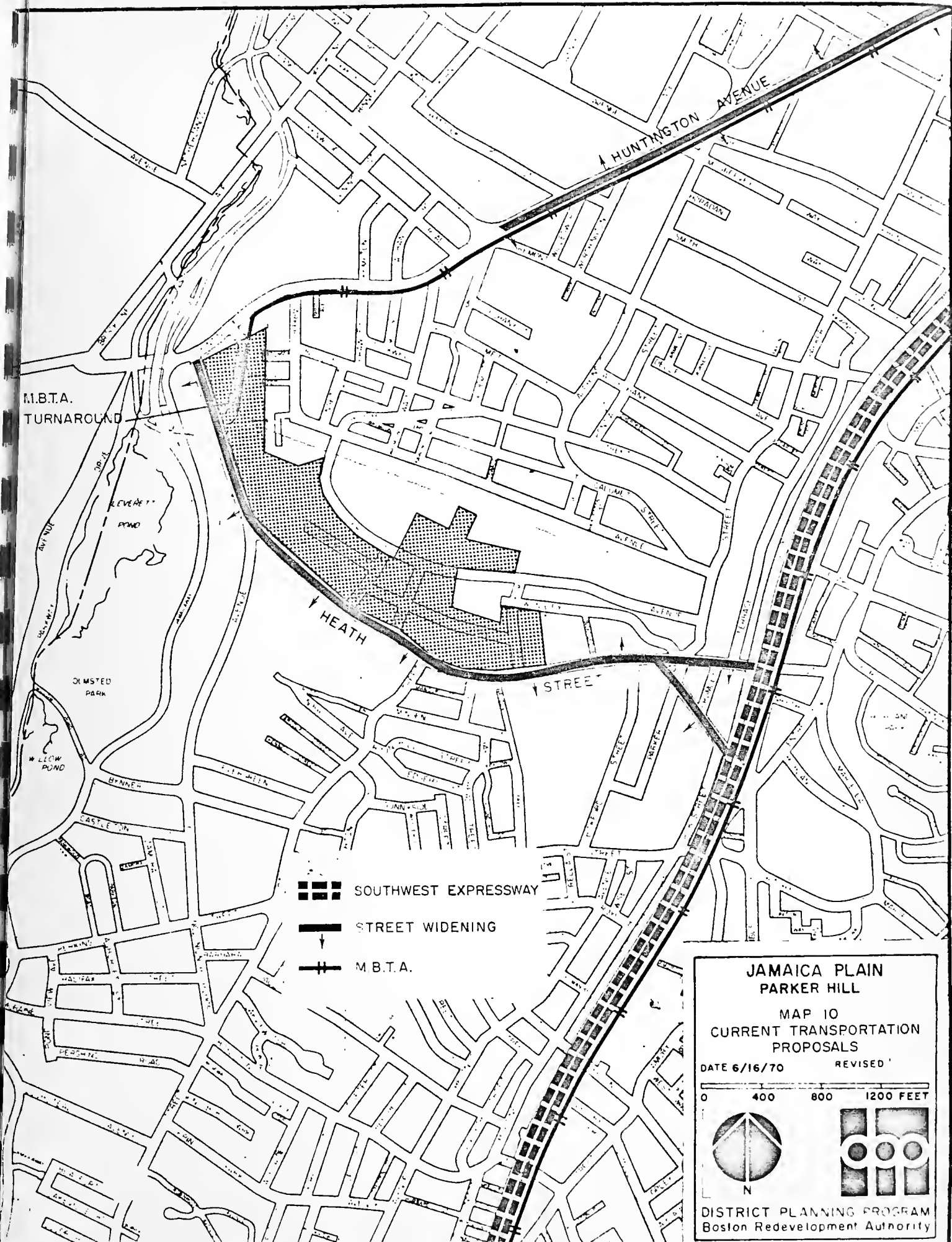




4.       Public Transit - The green line trolley operates on Huntington-South Huntington, Centre Streets without its own reservation. This arrangement prevents efficient trolley and auto movement. The MBTA plans to replace the trolley by buses. A turn-around at or near Parker Hill will be needed.

Four major proposals aimed at improving the circulation to and around the Parker Hill site currently exist. These include (See Map 10) the Southwest Expressway, the widening of Heath Street, the establishment of a trolley turn-around at the intersection of Huntington-South Huntington Avenues and the widening of Huntington Avenue up to Brigham Circle.








M.B.T.A.  
TURNAROUND

HUNTINGTON AVENUE

HEATH

STREET

REVERET POND  
DIMSTED PARK  
LOW POND

-  SOUTHWEST EXPRESSWAY
-  STREET WIDENING
-  M.B.T.A.

JAMAICA PLAIN  
PARKER HILL

MAP 10  
CURRENT TRANSPORTATION  
PROPOSALS

DATE 6/16/70

REVISED

0 400 800 1200 FEET



DISTRICT PLANNING PROGRAM  
Boston Redevelopment Authority



### III. DESCRIPTION OF PARKER HILL SITE

#### A. Size

The Parker Hill site is about 24 acres in size.

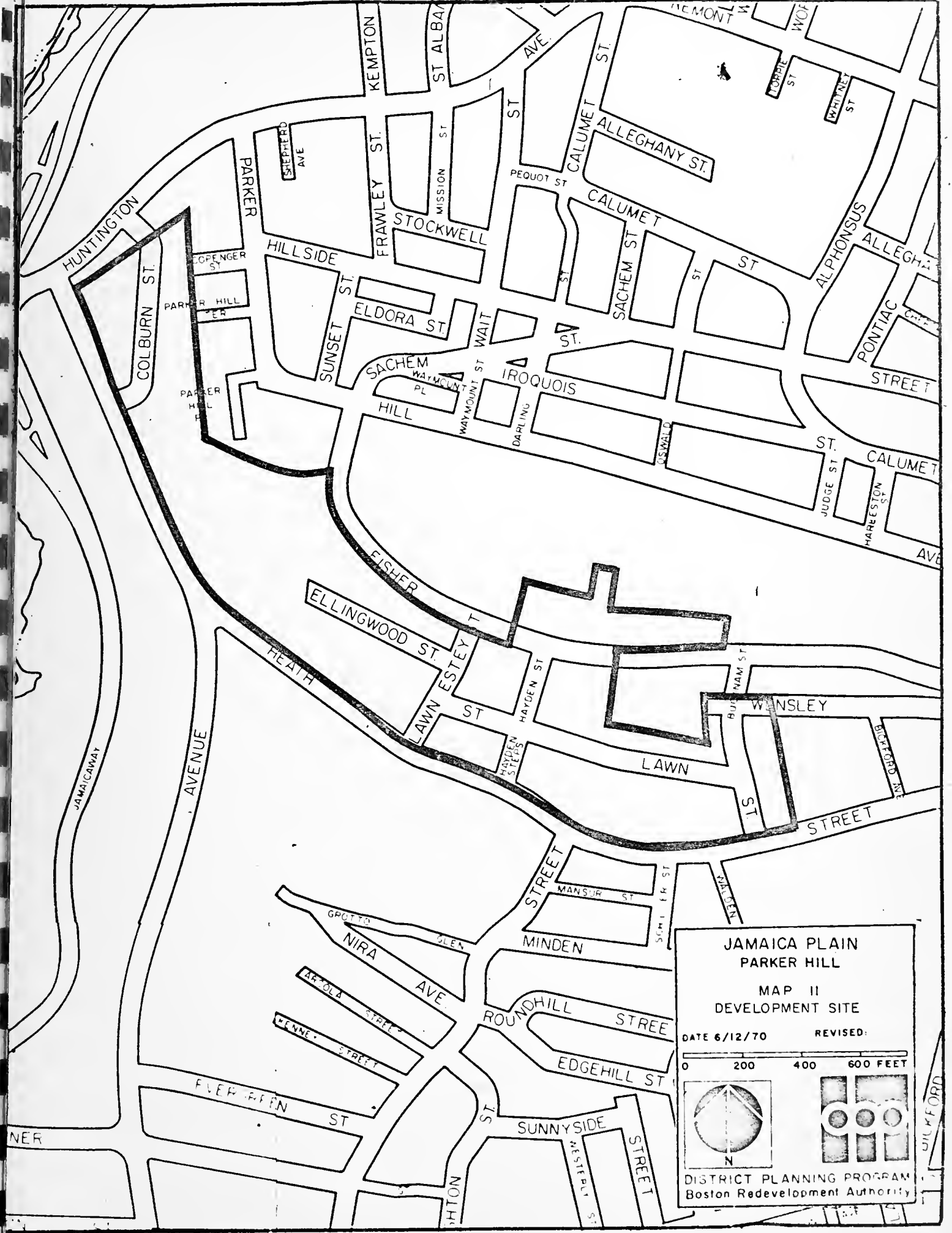
#### B. Location

The site is bounded on the north by Fisher Street, and on the west by Buckman Street. The southern and western boundaries are Heath Street and the rear of Colburn Street (see Map 11).

#### C. Topography

The topography of this site ranges in elevation from approximately 214 down to elevation 38. In the area opposite the intersection of Heath Street and South Huntington Avenue, sheer drops of up to 120 feet exist. In the most northerly portion of the site (Colburn Street and South Huntington Avenue) from the rear of the existing buildings, the grade rises very sharply. In the area between Lawn Street and Estey Street, the grades become a little more gradual, rising in elevation from approximately elevation 75 to elevation 150. There are only very small isolated areas of actual ledge outcrops found in the entire site, but it is







**JAMAICA PLAIN  
PARKER HILL**

MAP II  
DEVELOPMENT SITE

DATE 6/12/70      REVISED:

0      200      400      600 FEET

DISTRICT PLANNING PROGRAM  
Boston Redevelopment Authority





felt that ledge is not too far below the surface in any particular area. No boring data was found to be readily available for the site.

D. Ownership

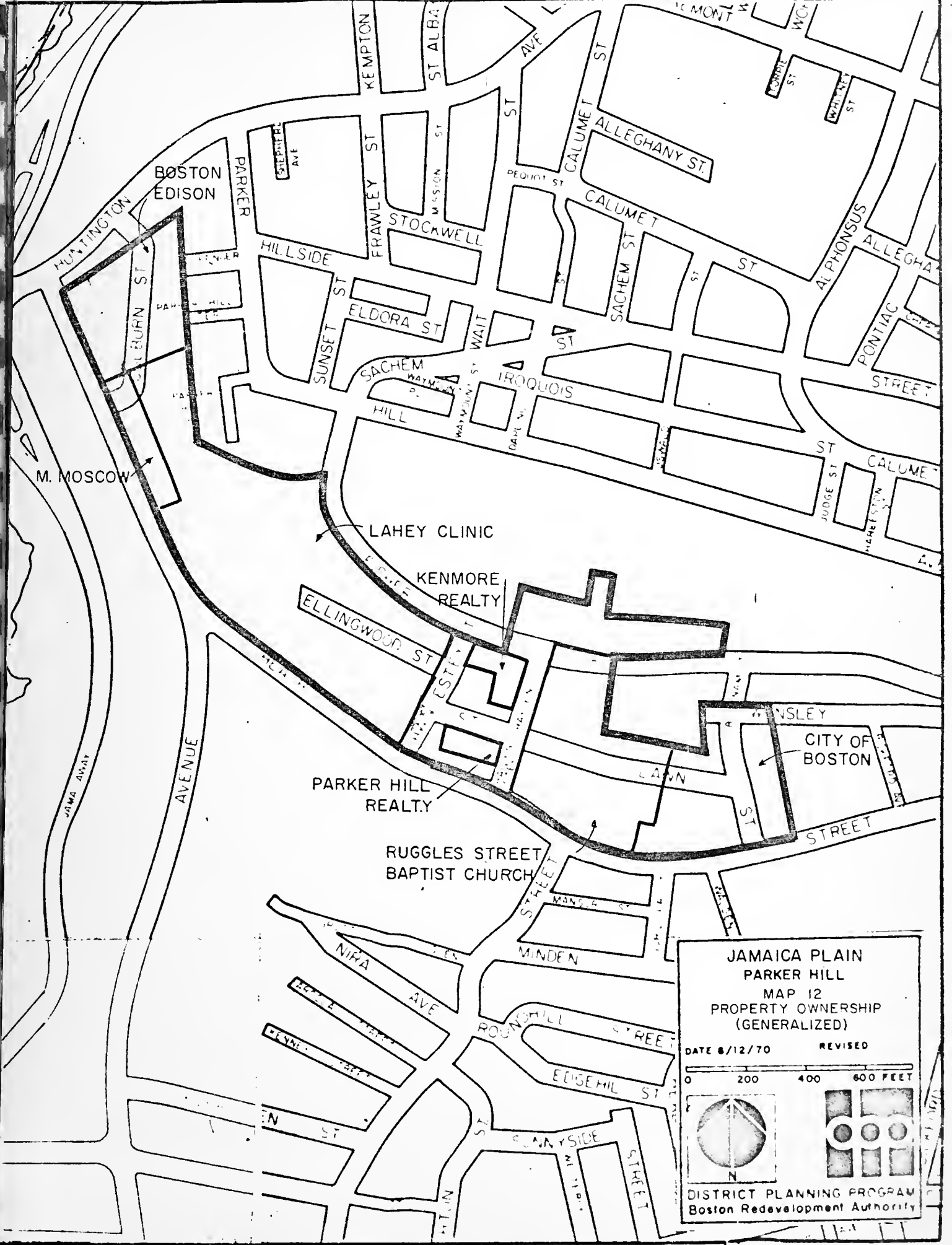
At least 22 of the 24 acre Parker Hill site is owned by 6 major landholders. They are the Lahey Clinic, the Ruggles Street Baptist Church, Parker Hill Realty, Sherborne Kenmore Realty, M. Moscow and Boston Edison. The location of these holdings is indicated on Map 12.

E. Land Use

There are fifty-five residential structures in the Parker Hill site. (Thirty-seven of these houses are wooden, three-decker structures). Thirteen are owned by the Ruggles Street Church, and twenty-four are owned privately.

The remaining eighteen residences are three-story, brick townhouses. The one commercial building on the site is a large brick structure. It was originally constructed as a brewery but it now serves as a warehouse for the Frazer Walker Moving Company.







**JAMAICA PLAIN  
PARKER HILL**  
MAP 12  
PROPERTY OWNERSHIP  
(GENERALIZED)

DATE 8/12/70      REVISED

0      200      400      600 FEET

DISTRICT PLANNING PROGRAM  
Boston Redevelopment Authority



F. Building Condition

The vast majority of residences are wooden three deckers in serious need of rehabilitation. Those properties owned by the Ruggles Street Church and the city are deteriorating to the point where they are almost beyond the stage of feasible rehabilitation. M. Moscow has applied for a 221D4 loan loan to rehabilitate the four story brick properties which he owns on South Huntington Avenue. The Frazer Walker Moving Company recently renovated the interior of their property for use as an office and storage facility. The exterior is in fair condition.

G. Land Value

Taking into consideration the difficult topographical conditions, sales of better located sites, present zoning, the condition of the immediate neighborhood, and the presence of 70 improved structures on the site, the value of the property has been estimated at \$1.80/ sq. ft.

H. Utilities

1. Sewers-Sanitary

There presently exists within the site and in the peripheral streets a sanitary sewer system, and about 50% of the area is actually a combined system. The



sizes of these lines range from 8" to 15". Any development can be connected into these existing peripheral lines with no problem. In the easterly portion of the site there exists the 6'6" by 7' Metropolitan high level intercepting sewer. This ranges from approximately 40' below grade to 100' below grade up through the intersection of Buckman Street and Fisher Avenue.

## 2. Sewers-Storm Drainage

The area is serviced by a storm drainage system ranging in sizes from 10" to an intercepting sewer of 2'4" by 3'6" in size in Huntington Avenue. Any contemplated development could be connected into this existing peripheral system with no problem at all.

## 3. Water

In the interior and peripheral streets, high service lines ranging in size from 6" to 48" are found. Along Huntington and South Huntington Avenue, low service lines ranging in size from 8" to 48" exist. It is felt that any need for the development of this site can be accommodated with no problem whatsoever.





#### 4. Street Lighting

The existing street lighting system should be revamped completely to accommodate the density that is anticipated in this development.

#### I. Status of Streets

Of the eleven interior and peripheral streets, three are private and the remainder are public.

#### J. Construction Problems

It is our opinion that construction problems to be anticipated in the utility systems to be installed would be minimal. We do feel, however, that construction problems with regard to the development may be rather large because of the topography of the site.



#### IV. DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

##### A. General Considerations

Three neighborhood areas - Parker Hill, South Huntington, and the Council for Medical Institutions, lie either within or adjacent to the Parker Hill Site. As a result of this proximity a program of development for Parker Hill would have a major impact on these areas. Other neighborhoods in the district, either because of their location or characteristics, would not be as directly affected. The following discussion, therefore, will only concern these 3 "impacted" neighborhoods.

##### 1. Parker Hill

The needs and the priorities of the Parker Hill Neighborhood relate to a continuation of the traditional residential characteristic of the area. This goal involves four priority needs: maintain the Blessed Sacrement Elementary School; obtain an increase in the delivery of public services such as police, health, recreation; conserve the existing housing stock; and control institutional expansion.



The first two priorities concern needs which are outside the scope of the resources being evaluated in this study. Therefore, only the later two objectives will be discussed.

The existing housing stock is in and of itself not a problem. Rather, the increase in crime, the shift in population, the decline of the schools and the fear of institutional expansion have led homeowners to sell out to absentee landlords, to neglect home improvements or to hold their property until its value increases.

As a result of these problems, the existing housing stock can be dealt with in one of three ways:

- a. Let the housing deteriorate until the point that clearance is needed.
- b. Allow for spot clearance of deteriorated sections and construct new housing on vacant land.
- c. Promote a major program of community conservation. This would include rehabilitation of the existing housing, the containment of institutional expansion, and the implementation of a series of public service programs for safety, education, recreation, etc.



The last alternative, a program of community conservation, is obviously the most preferable solution from the point of view of the long time residents. There would be no displacement, and the existing structure would be maintained.

The essential question is how the development of the Parker Hill site could achieve this objective. One can assume that any development program which did not radically change the residential character of Parker Hill would naturally have a positive influence on the adjacent neighborhood. In other words, a residential program of medium density with a moderate to middle income mix would have the most positive impact on Parker Hill.

The second need of the Parker Hill neighborhood - the containment of institutional expansion - is pertinent to the above discussion. A residential program for the Parker Hill site would serve to contain institutional expansion. This objective would also serve to up-grade the adjacent neighborhood.

## 2. South Huntington Neighborhood Improvement Association

The major impact of a development program for the Parker Hill site would be the potential demolition of





their residential structures. That is, if transportation studies determine that South Huntington Avenue would have to be widened, then relocation housing will be required for the residents living in this area. The Parker Hill site could serve this need.

### 3. Council of Medical Institutions

The Parker Hill site could serve as a location for a variety of institutional needs. These include a demand for housing, a garage structure to service the medical personnel, and a demand for a site upon which one could locate a major medical institution.

## B. Opportunities and Constraints

### 1. The Site

#### a. Opportunities

- 1) Availability of large parcels of vacant land. About 16 acres of the 24-acre site are vacant and for sale.
- 2) Positive influences generated by adjacent public and private developments. These include the Jefferson Elementary School, a rest home at Fisher Street, thirty-six in-fill units (8 of which will be on Buckman Street) and the rehabilitation of residential structures on South Huntington.



3) The projected acquisition cost of the Parker Hill site is \$1.80 per square foot. This cost is above that paid for industrial sites in the area. It is, on the other hand, competitive with the price of office and middle-income housing sites in this part of the City. Institutions in the Brigham Circle area, for example, are paying more than \$20 a square foot for land.

b. Constraints

1) Development of major portions of the site is severely restricted because of the steep slope of the land.

2) Depending upon the scale of the program, certain road improvements will be required.

At the very least this will include the widening of Heath and Fisher Streets. Additional on site road improvements could include the widening of South Huntington and Huntington Avenues, the establishment of an MBTA turnaround at Colburn Street, the abandonment of some of the older streets and the creation of new local streets.



2. The Community

a. Opportunities

1) Site development could stabilize the shifts in population by providing housing and a secure living environment for those sectors of the population presently in a state of flux. This would include the tenants of South Huntington as well as students, interns and families.

2) Site development could stimulate those road improvements which are required to bring this sector of the City into an efficient regional road network. This would include the widening of Heath, South Huntington and Huntington Avenues, the provision of a trolley turn-around and an improved intersection at South Huntington and Huntington Avenues.

3) The provision of housing on the Parker Hill site would serve to reinforce as well as upgrade the residential character of Parker Hill. In addition the critical demand by certain sectors of the population for housing and a decent living environment would be met.



4) The development of the Parker Hill site for residential uses could serve as a catalyst for racial balance in the neighborhood and in the local elementary school.

5) A residential development of the Parker Hill site would increase the demand for new shopping and service facilities.

b. Constraints

1) The shift in population characteristics i.e. loss in total population, increase in the number of transients and non-white families has a depressing effect upon the Parker Hill area. Site development, if it is to up-grade the area, will have to counter these trends.

2) The cost and complexity of proposed transportation improvements for the Parker Hill area is such as to severely restrict the scheduling of these with the development of Parker Hill. Site development will have to take the feasibility and schedule of the following improvements into account.





- a) Construction of the South West Expressway, Jackson Square and Roxbury Crossing interchanges.
  - b) Widening of Heath Street
  - c) Construction of Brigham Circle Dip.
  - d) Construction of a new intersection at Huntington-South Huntington Avenues.
  - e) Widenings and new streets on Parker Hill.
  - f) Trolley turn-around near South Huntington.
  - g) Orange line construction
- 3) The use of the Parker Hill site for family housing is limited by the capacity of the new Jefferson School to absorb an additional 100-200 children.



3. The Neighborhood

a. Opportunities

1) Medium density - i.e. low and high rise housing program for Parker Hill could reinforce and up-grade the residential character of the area.

2) The Parker Hill site could provide needed expansion space for medical related use such as clinics, hospitals, motel, a garage and shuttle system, and housing for staff and families.

3) If South Huntington Avenue is to be widened, the Parker Hill site could serve as a base for the construction of relocation housing.



1) The establishment of major institutional uses on Parker Hill would reinforce a negative city-wide pattern of institutional expansion and residential decline.

2) The social and economic costs of acquiring the properties on Huntington and South Huntington Avenues would be great. M. Moscow is presently investing more than \$1,000,000 in rehabilitation, and the South Huntington Neighborhood Improvement Association is undertaking several projects of neighborhood conservation.



## V. DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES

In the discussion below, three alternatives for the development of the Parker Hill New Neighborhood Site:

- 1) Residential
- 2) Institutional
- 3) A mix of residential and institutional uses

### A. Alternative 1 - Residential

#### 1. Goal

The goal of this proposal is to satisfy the housing needs of staff and employees of the Fenway institutions as well as the residents of the Parker Hill, Jamaica Plain area by the creation of a contemporary in-town residential neighborhood on the south side of Parker Hill.

#### 2. Program

##### a. Family Housing

A stable residential neighborhood would be created by providing a total 760 units. The proposed unit mix would include 350 efficiencies, 190 one-bedrooms, 150 two-bedrooms, and 70 three-bedrooms, all of which would be rental apartments. The income limits would be that established by the MFHA program - 25% low-moderate income - 75% middle income.

##### b. High-Rise Housing

In order to satisfy the housing needs of the Fenway institutional staff and employees as well as





to take advantage of the unique views of Parker Hill, 8-story structures with a total of 540 unit are proposed. The income limits would also be that established by the MFHA program.

c. Parking

Parking for the family housing would be provided below grade at the ratio of 1 space/unit. Parking for the high rise structures would be provided in separate, multi-story structures at the ratio of 1 space/unit.

d. Parks

A neighborhood playground would be built into the family housing area and a series of green walkways would be provided. Major vistas would be preserved.

e. Commercial and Community Facilities Space

Local commercial facilities would be provided along with a meeting room for the family housing.



B. ALTERNATIVE 2 - INSTITUTIONAL

1. Goal

The goal of this proposal is to provide expansion space for medical institutions so as to alleviate congestion and infringement upon the residential neighborhoods of Parker Hill, Roxbury tenants and Mission Hill main and extension.

2. Program

a. Institutional Uses and Parking

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Building Sq.Ft.</u>	<u>Parking Spaces</u>
1. Clinic	500,000	1600
2. Hospital	510,000	1350
3. Extended Care Unit	100,000	

b. Commercial Uses and Parking

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Building Sq.Ft.</u>	<u>Parking Spaces</u>
4. Motel-400 rooms	180,000	430

c. Residential Uses and Parking

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Building Sq.Ft.</u>	<u>Parking Spaces</u>
5. Residences for Residents & Nurses	40,000	40

d. Transportation Improvements

- 1) Widen Heath Street
- 2) Widen Fisher Street
- 3) Parker Street - Huntington Avenue Improvement
- 4) Huntington - South Huntington Improvement
- 5) South Huntington Avenue widening
- 6) One-way system for Parker Hill



e. Neighborhood Improvements

Replacement housing for South Huntington

Neighborhood Improvement Association

C. Alternative 3 - Residential and Institutional

1. Goals

A goal of this proposal is to provide expansion space for medical institutions so as to alleviate congestion and infringement upon the residential neighborhoods of Parker Hill, Roxbury Tenants and Mission Hill Main and Extension. A second goal is to satisfy the housing needs of staff and employees of the Fenway institutions as well as the residents of the Parker Hill - Jamaica Plain area by the creation of a contemporary intown residential neighborhood on the south side of Parker Hill.

2. Program

a. Institutional Uses and Parking

a) Clinic - 250,000 sq.ft. - parking for 800 cars  
(260,000 sq.ft.)

b) Extended care unit - 50,000 sq.ft. - parking  
for 100 cars (325,000 s.f.)



Fenway

B65R.ph

Boston Redevelopment Auth.

AUTHOR

Parker Hill Study. 1970.

TITLE

Fenway

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Parker Hill Study

